

THE CONTINUUM **EDGE**

INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

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The topic of employees not wanting to come to work, lacking engagement, and feeling unexcited about their employer has been in management literature for a while. I think we're all aware of it. Has anything new emerged recently that can help employees become more engaged?

A: Much research has been conducted on employee engagement. The Gallup Organization has invested heavily in it, with recent findings showing that when employees strongly agree that they trust organizational leadership, they are nearly four times more likely to be engaged. Whatever you do to build trust increases the likelihood of having engaged employees. Start with these goals:

- Stay visible and communicate your vision, work-unit goals, what's changing and why. Communication reduces uncertainty, which fuels rumors and negativity.
- Show employees you care by being empathetic and available.
- Praise their efforts. You may care deeply, but if they aren't feeling it, it's not happening.
- Never let employees wonder what they should be doing or how their job fits into the larger picture.
- Trust them to do the job they were hired to do; trust helps prevent micromanaging.
- Look for ways to elevate their skills and education so they don't feel stuck or unable to envision a future.

Stay engaged yourself. If you're struggling, Continuum EAP can help.

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An employee tested positive for marijuana years ago and was referred to treatment. Recently, he came up positive on a random drug screen. He says it was because of passive inhalation of marijuana smoke. Is this a legitimate excuse?

A: Passive inhalation of marijuana smoke is a common explanation employees offer when confronted with a positive drug test. It is technically possible for someone to inadvertently inhale marijuana smoke, but modern laboratory testing makes this explanation highly unlikely.

Drug tests are designed with established cutoff levels, so a result is not reported as positive unless the concentration of THC (marijuana's psychoactive component) exceeds a well-validated threshold. Simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time and being subjected to pot smoke will not meet the cut-off levels. This is more likely an attempt to deflect responsibility or avoid the consequences.





- **If I make a formal referral of an employee to Continuum EAP, is it helpful for the EAP to have a copy of the employee's performance improvement plan prior to their first meeting?**



For more information on how to make a formal referral, contact Continuum EAP.

A: It is always helpful to contact Continuum EAP prior to making a referral so we are aware of the performance issues, understand what you would like the Work Performance Improvement coaching to address, and to determine the appropriate releases of information we will need in order to coordinate the referral. Sharing the performance improvement plan is also beneficial. It helps the EAP understand what the employee has been told regarding performance concerns and expectations.

In addition, the plan serves as a useful reference during coaching discussions and allows for a deeper look at the more nuanced challenges the employee may be experiencing. Performance improvement plans often provide insight into the employee's history of performance decline and past attempts to correct concerns. This information can reveal underlying issues that may not be immediately visible, helping the employee assistance professional tailor support more effectively.

Why is domestic violence that takes place entirely away from the workplace regarded as a risk for the employer and fellow workers?

A: It may initially seem that domestic violence and workplace violence have no correlation, but there are numerous documented incidents demonstrating that domestic violence is a risk for the employer and co-workers. The aggressor may decide to come to the workplace because there is certainty that the victim will be present and easy to locate.

With desperation — often associated with violence — a loss of boundaries can occur, leading the aggressor to view the workplace as a stage for confrontation. If this happens, confrontation with others is inevitable, and this increases the potential for actual harm to anyone who happens to be in the way or nearby. The aggressor simply does not care about consequences when experiencing rage.

Most organizations consider domestic violence a legitimate workplace safety issue, and many also educate and train supervisors to recognize warning signs, coordinate with Human Resources, and follow a protocol to reduce risk.

